

Essays and Contributions.

THE ESSENTIALS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY G. W. RENCH.

Notwithstanding the plain language used by our Lord in his commission to his disciples and the simple account given of *what* they preached under this charge and the comprehensive and specified acts of obedience of several thousand persons who entered the fold of Christ, so many act as though there is nothing defined and hence the process of conversion or turning to God is a mere matter of choice.

When our Lord and Law-giver uttered the sweeping statement that I am the way, the truth and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me, it is strange that men will go to Moses and the law, the prophets, some church creed or discipline or to their own desires to find the way unto the Father. Christ says it is by me or my way.

When we come to this way we find that his disciples were told to "Go and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; to 'preach my Gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be condemned.'" Everyone who knows what the Lord said, admits and if he be a teacher, teaches, that we are to go and teach all nations the Gospel, and yet it is just as certain that they were to baptize as to preach. And more, just as sure as they were to go and teach the Gospel and baptize, they were to baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Don't talk about some other way doing as well when the Lord says this is the way. Every denomination of any note has accepted time and time again this "one baptism" as right though they practice some other way—even a way that is backward.

Every convert made by the apostles who were to teach this "new and living way" heard the Gospel, believed it or in Christ, repented of their old ways of thinking and doing, confessed Christ and were baptized into him, or his kingdom. Not a soul then could come unto

the Father but by Christ's way. Read Acts ii, 8, 9, 10, 16, and 19 and see.

There were no "just as you believe" preachers among the apostles. They planted down the proffered terms of the Lord and men could accept them—all of them—or remain out of Christ. Their requirements were definite and explicit and can be learned with one careful reading of the Acts of Apostles.

In the face of the requirements of the apostles we hear of Brethren preachers who will baptize persons "with the understanding that they may go to whatever church they please!"

If we as Brethren are representing the cause intrusted to us by the apostles and are contending for the truth once delivered unto us, how can we do that which the apostles did not authorize but condemned? Such a course is unscriptural, misleading and should not be tolerated.

(1.) Because it either teaches that we do not know what the divine law requires of us or that these requirements do not amount to much if we do know what they are. Confusion worse than Babel follows when the soul ought to be anchored to the clear and well defined declarations of God's will. It teaches that the plan of salvation which we champion and declare as the Gospel is no better than some other way different from our's—the Gospel way no better nor safer than the way which is not Gospel.

(2.) Because it recognizes and encourages the impossibility of one fold and one shepherd which was taught by Christ, reaffirmed and enforced by Paul in 1 Cor. It encourages division when Paul says to teach the same thing that there be no division among you. What does the confession of faith or of Christ amount to when he who takes it says at the same time that there are some things which Jesus said for us to do that he thinks is unnecessary and that he will not promise to do them? One might confess Christ a dozen times and if he told me he did not believe in feet washing (or anything else taught) I would not baptize him. Believe in Christ and then deny what he taught? Impossible! Such persons do not need baptism—they are not

ready for it—but need faith; faith that will let go of self and cling to Christ.

These essentials are either necessary or they are not. We teach that they are necessary for salvation. Let us practice what we preach.

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FAULT FINDING.

BY JOSEPH HALL.

If it were possible that we could live at home or among friends with whom we could find no fault, it would certainly be a foretaste of heaven that is not granted among mortals. We all know that all have faults or peculiar failings, and that every stage of our existence has its imperfections, and that every hour of our lives shows us some appearance that could be improved or perfected.

Granting, therefore, that there is much in this life that we can find fault with, if we contract the habit, it will lead to great discontentment. We can find plenty of food to nourish the habit and make ourselves chronic grumblers. Whenever there is a person of like character in a neighborhood,—he is dreaded throughout the entire social circle.

Such a person can let no imperfection escape his comment, and seeks through the weakness of his friends to show his wonderful power of discrimination, and at home or abroad will pass his life in continual grumbling. We may guard against such sinful habits by exercising Christian charity.

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, then we will not have much difficulty in doing good to our brethren. Let us make a kind allowance for the short-comings of our friends—at all times heeding the golden rule.

It is so easy for us to find fault with our brethren, and usually those who find fault and say mean things about us do not help in their church, but act rather as watch-dogs, and want everybody to bow to their fault-finding-throne, every time they bark. Yes, a great cry about the mote in the brother's eye, and never a word about the beam of jealousy, or anger, or hate, or selfish motives, or false ambition that is in their own eye.